You may feel that you have reached a stage when living in your current home is becoming too difficult. Perhaps you are struggling to get around the place, are no longer able to do everything for yourself, or are feeling a bit isolated and lonely.

At the same time you may not want to give up your independence and privacy, and don't need as much assistance as is offered in a care home or extra care housing. If this is the case, sheltered housing (sometimes known as retirement housing, and known in Westminster as Community Supportive Housing) may be the solution for you.

Sheltered housing schemes are properties for rent aimed at people over 60 years of age, although depending on where you live some schemes are available for slightly younger people. There is no upper age limit on who can live there. Tenants are generally able to do most things for themselves. They are often still quite active, want to be as independent as possible and come and go as they please. If a tenant does need some assistance with day to day tasks then they can arrange this as they would in any other accommodation.

Sheltered housing properties are usually self-contained, unfurnished, purpose-built flats, houses or bungalows with their own front doors, kitchens and bathrooms. They are usually designed to be easily accessible for people with wheelchairs or other mobility issues. Many schemes will have flats for couples, as well as one-bedroom and studio flats for single people.

There's often also a communal area where residents can socialise and organise and attend events and activities, and there will usually be a communal laundry and gardens.

Other information and advice

Age UK provide independent advice on accessing sheltered housing schemes, and on your other housing options in older age.

NHS Carers Direct has advice and information for people considering a move to sheltered accommodation, either for themselves or for a relative.

The Which website offers information on what to consider when thinking of moving to sheltered or supportive accommodation.

The Housing Care website has advice on sheltered accommodation.